

# Identifying and Responding to Victims of Human Trafficking in Washington

## WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is modern day slavery. It involves forcing or coercing people to provide labor or commercial sex. Human trafficking occurs when a person uses violence, deception, or threats to force or coerce another person to provide labor or commercial sex, and to prevent that person from leaving the situation. Human trafficking also occurs when a person recruits, harbors, transports, provides or obtains another person knowing that force, fraud, or coercion will be used to exploit the other person for labor or commercial sex.

## WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

- About half of all human trafficking victims are children.
- Many victims have first suffered other crimes such as sexual assault/sexual abuse and/or domestic violence.
- Traffickers often promise their victims a better life through employment, marriage, education, or a life in a more prosperous country.

<i>Vulnerable people may include:</i>	<i>There is no “typical” face of human trafficking. Victims can be:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Undocumented migrants</li><li>▪ Runaway and homeless youth</li><li>▪ Temporary contracted guest workers</li><li>▪ “Mail Order” brides</li><li>▪ Child/Adolescent/Adult victims of physical and/or emotional abuse</li><li>▪ Child/Adolescent/Adult victims of sexual assault/sexual abuse</li><li>▪ Women and families in debt</li><li>▪ Displaced peoples (natural disasters, conflict)</li><li>▪ Oppressed or marginalized groups</li><li>▪ Those living in poverty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Individuals, families or groups</li><li>▪ Formally educated or illiterate</li><li>▪ U.S. Citizens or foreign nationals</li><li>▪ Documented or undocumented</li><li>▪ Women and men</li><li>▪ Children and adults</li><li>▪ Exploited for labor, sex or both</li></ul>

## MEANS OF CONTROL USED BY TRAFFICKERS

- **Force:** Physical assault (beating, burning, slapping, hitting, assault with a weapon, etc.), physical confinement and isolation, rape, gang rape, and other forms of sexual assault/sexual abuse.
- **Fraud:** False or deceptive offers of employment, marriage, or a better life, lying about work conditions (ex. not telling someone commercial sex will be required), false promises, withholding wages.
- **Coercion:** Threats to life, safety, family members, or other loved ones. Threats to have a victim arrested or deported. Debt bondage: Use and manipulation of debt to create never-ending debt. Withholding legal documents such as identification. Creating a climate of fear. Psychological abuse.

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## IDENTIFYING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Traffickers hide or disguise their victims in order to avoid detection.
- Victims of both labor and sex trafficking are usually told to tell a story which disguises the threats and violence keeping them enslaved.
  - Traffickers often coach victims to answer questions with a cover story about being a wife, student, tourist, employee or willing “sex worker.”
  - Due to fear of the trafficker, a victim will often tell this story to customers, service providers and law enforcement.
- Because human trafficking is a relatively newly recognized crime, it is rarely identified as “human trafficking” by members of the public or victims themselves.
- Service providers and law enforcement often don’t initially recognize when a person is being trafficked.
- Many victims of human trafficking are first treated as:
  - Clients in need of other assistance.
  - Victims of other crimes such as domestic violence and/or sexual assault/sexual abuse.
  - Perpetrators of a crime such as illegal immigration or prostitution.
- Victims may not always recognize that what is being done to them is a crime. Some victims:
  - May be unaware there are laws against the exploitation they are experiencing.
  - Blame themselves for their situations.
  - Develop loyalties or positive feelings toward the trafficker/s as a coping mechanism.

## KEY QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE IF A PERSON IS A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

If a person is experiencing or believes they would experience serious harm if they tried to leave a work or commercial sex situation, it is likely the person is a victim of human trafficking.

- Is this person free to leave their work situation?
- Is this person experiencing violence, deception, or threats which make it difficult or impossible to leave the work situation?
- Is this person experiencing or do they believe they would experience serious harm if they tried to leave the work situation?
- Does this person owe a debt which makes it difficult or impossible to leave a work situation?
- Is this person a minor who was induced to engage in commercial sex?
  - Any minor who is induced to engage in commercial sex is a trafficking victim according to federal law (18 U.S.C sec 1591).

## SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, the following is a list of services and resources available in Washington. Services are available to victims of human trafficking by contacting the Crime Victim Service Center in your area. Services include:

- Help in developing a plan to leave an exploitive employer or situation.
- Help accessing food, clothing, shelter, education and a doctor.
- Help understanding a victim’s rights and options.
- Help understanding the legal system, as well as other government agencies and services.

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Washington Crime Victim Service Centers by County	
<b>King, Snohomish, Island, Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Kitsap, Clallam &amp; Jefferson</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.800.346.7555	<b>Benton, Franklin, Asotin, Walla Walla, Columbia &amp; Garfield</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.888.984.2846
<b>Spokane</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.866.751.7119	<b>Pierce</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.866.336.8213
<b>Clark, Cowlitz &amp; Wahkiakum</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.888.425.1176	<b>Kittitas, Yakima, Klickitat &amp; Skamania</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.866.523.6468
<b>Stevens, Pend Oreille &amp; Ferry</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.800.269.2380	<b>Lincoln, Grant, Adams &amp; Whitman</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.800.701.8385
<b>Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Pacific &amp; Grays Harbor</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.866.711.2826	<b>Chelan, Douglas &amp; Okanogan</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 1.800.614.5117
<b>Washington State</b> <b>The Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN)</b> 24-Hour Hotline: 206.245.0782	
<b>Washington State</b> <b>Office of Crime Victims Advocacy</b> Hotline: 1.800.822.1067 (Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm)	

### CHILD VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The following agencies specialize in providing services to child victims of human trafficking:

- **Spruce Street Secure Crisis Center**  
Seattle, WA  
206.587.0992
- **YouthCare**  
Seattle, WA  
1.800.833.6388
- **Community Youth Services**  
Olympia, WA  
1.888.698.1816

For more information , please contact the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy by email at [OCVA@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:OCVA@commerce.wa.gov) or by phone at 1.800.822.1067.

